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ACTION EAP-00

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIJING 043195

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, APEC, US, CH
SUBJECT: CHINESE UP-BEAT APPRAISAL OF THE SEATTLE
MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS CLINTON AND JIANG

REF: A) BEIJING 42500; B) FBIS 0W3011203193;
C) FBIS HK 3011143193

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: AS CHINESE MFA OFFICIALS PRESENT AT THE
SEATTLE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS CLINTON AND JIANG
RETURN TO BEIJING, THEY (AND THOSE THEY HAVE BRIEFED)
HAVE BEEN PUTTING A POSITIVE SPIN ON THE MEETING.
THEIR PERSONAL COMMENTS ARE SIMILAR TO CHINESE PRESS
REPORTING ON THE CLINTON-JIANG MEETING SOURCED TO VICE
PREMIER AND FOREIGN MINISTER QIAN QICHEN. END SUMMARY.

3. DURING A NOVEMBER 30 ENCOUNTER WITH THE DCM, MFA
AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR MA ZHENGANG,
WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS
CLINTON AND JIANG, TERMED THE SESSION A "POSITIVE" AND
"CONSTRUCTIVE" EVENT THAT HAD BEEN NEEDED TO "MAINTAIN
MOMENTUM" IN U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS. MA SAID HE HOPED
THE SECRETARY COULD EARLY COME TO CHINA, AND THAT
WHILE WE COULD NOT SOLVE ALL DIFFERENCES AT MEETINGS
SUCH AS THE PRESIDENTS' MEETING, IT WAS, NEVERTHELESS,
IMPORTANT TO GET TOP LEVELS OF BOTH COUNTRIES ENGAGED
WITH EACH OTHER.

4. VICE PREMIER ZHU RONGJI, IN A NOVEMBER 30 MEETING
WITH WISCONSIN GOVERNOR THOMPSON (SEPT), COMMENTED
THAT CHINESE AND INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO THE RECENT
MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS IN SEATTLE HAD BEEN
VERY POSITIVE. HE CONTINUED THAT THE U.S. AND CHINESE
ECONOMIES WERE COMPLEMENTARY, AND THE SEATTLE MEETING
HAD LAID A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR CLOSER ECONOMIC
COOPERATION. HE ALSO CONCLUDED HIS MEETING WITH THE
WISCONSIN GOVERNOR BY REITERATING THE IMPORTANCE OF

CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES.

5. DURING A DECEMBER 1 LUNCH, MFA U.S. DIVISION CHIEF

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LIU XIAOMING, WHO ATTENDED THE CLINTON-JIANG MEETING,
TOLD POLOFFS THAT JIANG HAD BEEN VERY PLEASED WITH HIS
MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON. LIU SAID THAT JIANG
WAS IMPRESSED WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON'S SINCERITY AND
CLOSE ATTENTION TO HIS (JIANG'S) REMARKS. ALTHOUGH
THE MEETING HAD NOT RESULTED IN ANY BREAKTHROUGHS, IT
HAD CREATED A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH
OUTSTANDING ISSUES COULD BE ADDRESSED THROUGH FUTURE
BILATERAL EXCHANGES. THE PRESIDENTS' MEETING HAD NOT
BEEN INTENDED AS A NEGOTIATING SESSION, REASONED LIU,
BUT, RATHER AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PRESIDENTS TO
ESTABLISH RAPPORT, AND IT HAD BEEN A SUCCESS IN
ACHIEVING THIS LATTER GOAL. ILLUSTRATING THE DEGREE
OF RAPPORT ACHIEVED, LIU RECOUNTED THAT JIANG HAD
OFFERED TO ACCOMPANY PRESIDENT CLINTON ON THE CHINESE-
MADE SAXOPHONE GIVEN HIM BY JIANG, AND SAID THAT THE
PRESIDENT WAS CLEARLY PLEASED WITH THE GIFT. LIU ALSO
NOTED JIANG HAD INTERRUPTED HIS INTERPRETER AT ONE
POINT TO MAKE IT CLEAR IN ENGLISH TO PRESIDENT CLINTON
THAT HE (JIANG) WANTED AN OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD FUTURE
"KNEE TO KNEE" TALKS IN CHINA.

6. DURING THE SAME LUNCH, FIRST SECRETARY REN
GONGPING, WHO WAS NOT IN SEATTLE, TOLD US SEPARATELY
THAT JIANG WAS IMPRESSED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON, CITING
HIS YOUTH AND SKILL IN ARRANGING THE LEADERS' MEETING.
MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN
AFFAIRS LU SHUMIN, WHO WAS ALSO A STAY-AT-HOME,

OFFERED HIS THOUGHTS ON NEXT STEPS IN U.S.-CHINA
RELATIONS. LU SAID CHINA HOPED FOR AN INCREASE IN
BILATERAL VISITS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING VISITS BY THE
SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT NEXT YEAR. NOTING THAT
SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS WERE SCHEDULED TO
VISIT CHINA SOON, LU STATED THAT SUCH VISITS WERE
IMPORTANT IN INCREASING AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF
CONDITIONS IN CHINA.

7. AFTER AN INITIALLY CAUTIOUS STAB AT ANALYZING THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE CLINTON-JIANG ENCOUNTER (REF A),
CHINESE MEDIA HAS RECENTLY PUT A MUCH MORE POSITIVE
SPIN ON THE MEETING. XINHUA AND THE PRC-CONTROLLED
HONG KONG CHINA NEWS SERVICE (ZHONGGUO XINWENSHE) ON
NOVEMBER 30 BOTH FILED ARTICLES BASED ON A POSITIVE
APPRAISAL OF THE SEATTLE PRESIDENTS' MEETING BY
CHINESE VICE PREMIER AND FOREIGN MINISTER QIAN QICHEN
(REFS B AND C). QIAN REPORTEDLY STATED THAT AN
IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-U.S. RELATIONS CAN BE ANTICIPATED,
WITH INCREASING RECIPROCAL VISITS, INCLUDING TOP-LEVEL

CONTACTS. THIS WEEK'S OUTLOOK ("LIAOWANG") MAGAZINE,
ONE OF CHINA'S LEADING WEEKLIES, ALSO FEATURED AN
UP-BEAT ARTICLE ON THE CLINTON-JIANG MEETING. ROY

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